



Alpine Presbytery

resourcing the braided river

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Newsletter 14th May 2020

Keep Calm & Stay Alert

Most of you will have seen the significant document from PCANZ issued yesterday and called "COVID-19 Virus Update".

Overall it is a document about **compliance** i.e. it underscores the Government advice about activities and requirements under Level 2 and practical issues for churches and their activities in the short-term ahead. We realise, of course, that some guidelines will be reviewed in two weeks' time e.g. numbers that could attend church services. We await that clarification in due course.

You will note in the document that you are asked to lodge a copy of your COVID-19 health & safety plan *with Presbytery* **before** you restart church services. The PCANZ is addressing this issue because they are aware of the aspect of *risk*. Our church insurers do not want any Parish Council or Presbytery or the national church suffering public reaction and potential charges and legal costs for any failure to keep people safe. That's why the PCANZ are sounding serious about this. It *is* an important matter.

Here at the (virtual) Presbytery Office our experience tells us that many of you will possibly forget this step of letting us know your specific Health & Safety protocol for COVID-19. We hope, though, that in this instance you do put priority on this request and let us know what you are planning. [Here is an example of what one of our churches has already done.](#) It's not too hard to put together a plan. Please feel free to contact us if you need help!

What the PCANZ document *doesn't* focus on, understandably, is the bigger picture of *what we are learning* through this crisis. Our earlier letter out to you all about things you have valued and things that have challenged you is drawing some replies and we are grateful for that! You have been reflecting and pondering on 'where to from here'. That's great to hear! We hope that through this time you won't just be tempted to get back into 'business as usual' but be seeking God for direction for anything that is important and a development for helping us grow as faith communities in mission. One of our Ministers raised this on our weekly Zoom catch-up this week when he said:

It could be time for people to start naming at least one thing that they would like their elders/Parish Council/Session to consider leaving behind and one thing they would like to pursue as an active resistance to 'business as usual'.

He shared with us that to make changes we need to **resist** falling back to 'business as usual'; in other words, change does not come naturally; it usually faces resistance.

So... what has God been saying to you?

As a possible resource you can download this guide from Rev Mo Morgan (one of our PCANZ Ministers in the North Island) that you might find helpful as a guide for your reflections: [Discerning our priorities as we move forward.](#)

A further article from Siouxsie Wiles is also interesting with helpful background information. Here's a link for that one - <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/14-05-2020/>

Resources

We have set up a Covid-19 page on our website to give you ongoing access to the various resources available to use at this time. It will include lists of resources advised in previous Newsletters. Go to:

alpinepresbytery.org/covid-19/

A central place for resources is being coordinated here (scroll to bottom of the page)

www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/coronavirus-information.

Newsletter Items

We will be continuing with the Newsletter over the lockdown period. If you have notices or resources to share, please email to gail@alpinepresbytery.org

Cut off date for next week's Newsletter is **Thursday 21st May.**



[siouxie-wiles-toby-morris-simple-rules-to-play-it-safe-at-alert-level-two/](#)

We have noted that in the wider society there is a mixture of relief and angst as we enter Level 2. Some are pleased; some are frustrated; some are optimistic; some are tired and even angry. Social media is rife with a variety of responses - some seemingly helpful and some possibly not! Politics are also getting mixed into people's reactions. Despite the call to **kindness** we can quickly descend into criticism and blaming. Let's remember the attitude of Jesus and the values of the fruit of the Spirit! As followers of Christ we need to be careful about our responses. And as for public services of worship, surely another few weeks will not hurt us!?

Let's learn to be calm and stay alert for the sake of all those who are anxious and concerned about the health of their loved ones through this crisis!

The Garage Series

Here are this week's episodes of "The Garage Series." This is where we go out and about and find out what questions people are asking.

Episode #3, Don from Takaka. This one is a bit longer with a bonus extra reflection from Don about Dietrich Bonhoeffer. <https://youtu.be/2Wvt7TMsQEM>

Episode #4, Jess from Christchurch <https://youtu.be/TMSKdN1h90>

You may want to subscribe to the Alpine Presbytery YouTube channel while you are there. Maybe you have the same questions? Maybe you can talk about them in your congregation leadership meetings? Please share with us what solutions and ideas, and maybe further questions you come up with

Series introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2XeRLo1grM&t=3s>

Episode 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMV-VHBMdOI&t=39s>

Episode 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3pPhfWSV2o>

Alpine Mission Fund

The next round of applications to the Alpine Mission Fund closes on **Friday 29th May** for processing during June.

Anyone wishing to apply should download and complete an Expression of Interest form, which can be downloaded from our website: <https://alpinepresbytery.org/alpine-mission-fund-putea-mission/>

Moderator's Covid-19 Pastoral Message

The storm of Covid-19 has rocked and shaken us all. Each bubble, each person - in fact the whole nation, and maybe all of the world - are in disarray. The invisible enemy is wreaking havoc like never experienced before. We have a common foe. "Keep the faith, stand firm, do not be afraid." These are the words of our Lord Jesus to his disciples in times of trials, fears, death and uncertainty. Our Lord speaks these words to us, today.

Please keep going forward with how you have faced this intruder in the past seven weeks. Your resolve and your desire for life is profound. There is nothing stronger in life than human will. It is a precious gift of God from the beginning of time. You are making a difference for yourself and others. You are appreciated, valued and loved. "Keep going, do not be tired of doing good." (1 Peter 3:13)

Beloved, this dark cloud will not subdue us or cause us to surrender or concede. We will live, we will learn, we will prosper. We hold on to our hope and to our faith. Our God is the Creator of heaven and earth. In the image of God we were created. Praise and thank God always.

For our part also, keep everything and everyone in daily prayers. Call, email, and make contact with others as the Covid-19 alert moves down to level two. Adapt, adjust and do more where you can. We must lead by example, adhering to government guidelines. Remember the "front liners" in these unprecedented times. Look out for the least, the ill and the unfortunate.

Build and rebuild the church of our Lord wherever you are. Let the Spirit of God guide and lead. Many of our church services are online, reaching thousands weekly, globally.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus," the old hymn calls of us today.

Blessings,

Right Rev Fakaofu Kaio, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

[View or download a printable version of the Moderator's Covid-19 pastoral message](#)

Updated Presbytery Directory is now available to download here: [Presbytery Directory May 2020](#). Please contact Gail with any updates to your parish details.

A Resource for Funerals

In this time when many are not able to attend the funeral of a loved one, the Church of England have produced a resource for people to use at home to remember them. Download [“A simple reflection at home on the day of a funeral you cannot attend.”](#)

Where is God in a Pandemic?

St Barnabas' Anglican Church are hosting a Zoom seminar with theological and author Dr Nicola Hoggard Creegan on **Thursday 14 May at 7.30pm**, addressing the question 'Where is God in a Pandemic?' It will be a very stimulating seminar with lots of time for Q and A.

Nicola is a theologian based in Auckland. She specialises in the interface between evolutionary theory and systematic theology and has broad interests also in all issues of public and contextual theology and ecology. Her recent book, *Animal Suffering and the Problem of Evil* (OUP, 2013), examined theodicy given the reality of long aeons of animal suffering before humans arrived. She is currently completing a book on Free Will. Nicola has taught theology (and previously mathematics) in the US and NZ. She is co-Director of New Zealand Christians in Science, and is an adjunct supervisor at Flinders University, South Australia. She worships at All Saints in Ponsonby.

The link to join the seminar is <https://anglicanchurch-nz.zoom.us/j/95427063994>

The Vine Newsletter

Download this week's [Vine Newsletter](#)
[Click here](#) to sign up for the *The Vine* in your email inbox each week.

From last week

- **The Garage Series**
- **Moderator's Mother's Day message Sunday 10 May**
- [Vine Newsletter](#)
- [Bush Telegraph](#)
- **Pray As One NZ**
- **Where is God in a Pandemic?**
- **New e-books in the Hewitson Library**

What are we learning from this Crisis?

Are there new ideas & challenges that have come to light?

Presbytery asked these question of parishes a few weeks ago. Here are some replies.

Positives:

- Online resources have increased our reach.
- It has allowed – and will continue to allow - participation for those that can't come to church (health or other reasons)
- There has been more Pastoral care by way of ringing around and checking in on each other.
- Some people that were more on the fringe have been reconnected, and are now feeling part of the church family again.

Challenges:

- Financial.
- Technological: some people do not have/want access to technology to view online services.
- Helping people get over their anxieties about going out and about again; helping them to make their decisions about when to return to church.
- With online worship, making sure that the quality of what is offered is good. How can we upskill ourselves in the quality of what we offer online?

Dropbox link for documents mentioned in this newsletter: control & click, or copy & paste the link to your browser: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5k528skz4niqhg/AABDjLatKU2-C2reVHA6hVza?dl=0>

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Presbytery Directory

To download the Presbytery Directory, [Click here](#)

Any amendments or corrections should be advised to Gail in the Presbytery Office.

Alpine Presbytery Strategic Framework

[Click here](#) to download the Strategic Framework